



# The Final American Frontier

# Railroads

- **BLUM**: Great industrial power? Really about average after Civil War (463-64)
  - However, #1 by 1890 & manufacturing ↑12x 1865-1914
- *Why RR?* Gateway to mass prod/cons, national market, use of natural resources, unity of USA
  - 31Kmi in 1860s-200Kmi by 1900
  - 10x National Debt spent on RRs by 1897
  - 225M acres from federal & state governments
  - Fewer independent lines over time
  - Linked to post, telegraph & telephone + shipping + urban hub
  - Transcontinental railroad completed (1869)



# Miners' Bonanza!

- 1859—Gold discovered in Pikes Peak, CO
- 1859—Comstock Lode, NV → Biggest ever strike!
- 1874—Gold discovered in the Black Hills, SD →
  - Deadwood Mining Camp
- Copper, lead and zinc also mined



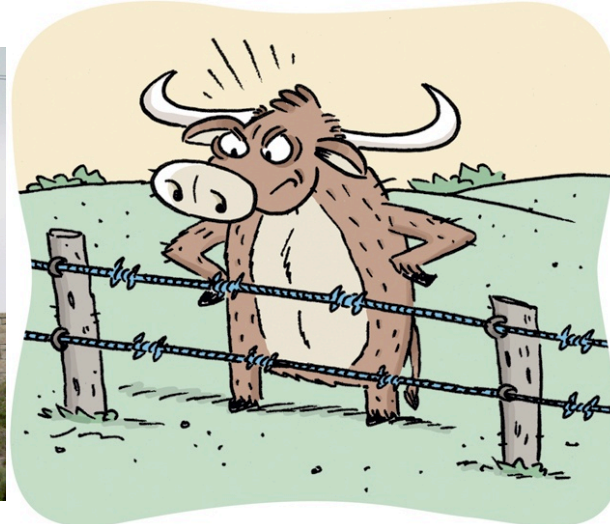
# Mining Communities

- Word of bonanza spread → growth
- Self-defense
- Vigilantes
- Developed schools, churches
- Applied for territorial status
- Constitution written → statehood?
- Some became **ghost towns** some became SFO



# Cattlemans' Bonanza!

- Texas (1850s) – Birthplace of **cow kings & cowboys**
  - Cattle up 1000% to 5M by 1860
- **Cow Towns** – Dropoffs from cattle-drive trails where RRs transported beef to Northern Markets
  - Ex. Abilene, Dodge City
  - Attempts to protect from **rustlers**; no real law/government
- **Open range** – Unfenced grazing of cattle during the winter to fatten the herd → cattle rush of the 1880s as people rushed to be ranchers
- **Joseph Glidden (1874)** – Barbed Wire



- Increase in supply of beef → a drop in prices
  - 1885 Winter – 85% of S. herds froze or starved to death
  - 1886 drought scorched grass for remaining herds
  - 1886-87 Winter – 40-50% of N. herds die
  - Sheep industry & farming weakened cattle industry
- More ranchers became landowners → Open range ranching ended

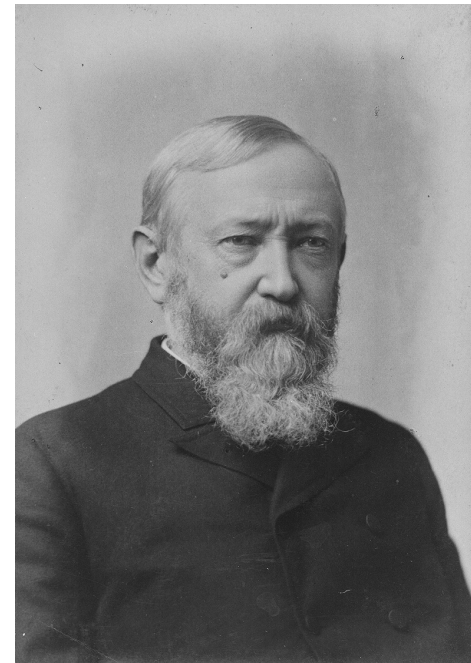


# Farmers on the Frontier

- Farms – 2M in 1860 → 5.7M in 1900; +190M acres
- **Homestead Act (1862)** – 160 acres to W. settlers
  - Unintentionally created land monopolies & 2/3 failed
- Railroad made settlement possible
- Sod Houses; New drills allowed for deeper wells; windmills pumped water to the surface
- Productivity ↑ w/ new machinery (459) →
  - Debt created by financing machines → squatters, tenancy



- **Dry Farming** – Deep plowing to keep soil moisturized → needed machines & lots of land
- **Oklahoma Sooners** – **Benjamin Harrison** gives in to pressure & announced free homesteads of 160 acres to resettle Indian territory
- From 1867-1912—NE, CO, ND, SD, MT, WA, WY, UT, OK, NM and AZ entered the Union



# Frontier Gender & Racial Roles

- **Women** – More accepted
  - had to work just as hard as the men
  - Gain the right to vote in Wyoming & other western states
- **Blacks** – Not fully accepted in the West
  - still a lot of racism and not offered the same land as white homesteaders
- **Chinese & Mexicans** – Discriminated against

